



Dovetail

Providing resources to Iowa's peace and justice community from a faith perspective
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Andrew Mills

TAYBEH, West Bank-Father Raed Abusahlia seems indignant as he speeds his black Volkswagen down the hilly road at the edge of the village.

Deep in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, the Palestinian village of Taybeh exists as a final hilltop outpost of sorts. With no mosques and three churches, it is the only all-Christian village left in the Holy Land.

But in the decades of violence, occupation and economic hardship, thousands have fled for better lives abroad and just 1,300 villagers remain.

The energetic Abusahlia, 42, who resembles a talkative version of the Mr. Bean comic character, has made it his mission to convince the remaining Christians to stay put.

The Christians who remain here believe they have a special connection to Taybeh because 2,000 years ago, when it was known as Ephraim, Jesus is said to have taken refuge in the village during the weeks leading to the crucifixion.

"In Taybeh, we were evangelized by Jesus Christ himself," says Abusahlia, now sipping thick Arabic coffee in his cluttered office at Christ the Redeemer church.

"We are the successors of His apostles. And so, when people tell me they are preparing to move abroad, I make this theoretical argument: 'You are here because God wanted you to be here. It's not by chance. Your mission is very clear: to witness Jesus Christ in His homeland.'" Villagers joke that if Jesus and his apostles had been going forth from Taybeh on that final journey to Jerusalem, they never would have made it because they'd all have been detained at the Israeli checkpoint on the edge of town for not having the proper travel permits. Though Jerusalem lies just 25 kilometres to the southwest, it is a world away from Taybeh, on the other side of several army checkpoints and the eight-metre-high concrete separation barrier, which Israel says it is building to protect its citizens from Palestinian attacks, including suicide bombings.

"It's only the strong, courageous people like me who stay here," says Father Raed Abusahlia, whose Christ the Redeemer church is one of the three Christian parishes in the West Bank village of Taybeh.

"Jesus Christ was mighty," says Father David Khoury, pastor of St. George Greek Orthodox church here." He could have cleared all the checkpoints in His way by saying a word. But people like us, we're powerless. We can't resist the gun. We can't resist the bulldozer. We can't resist the checkpoint."

Villagers are allowed to cross the separation barrier only if they hold special travel permits, a constant reminder of the occupation, which Palestinian Christians blame for the social and economic hardships that have been forcing their people to emigrate overseas.

Before Israel became a state in 1948, Christians made up 7.3 per cent of the population of the Holy Land.

Now, at fewer than 160,000 people – 110,000 in Israel and just 50,000 in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza – Christians account for only 1.7 per cent of the population, according to a survey conducted for Sabeel, a Palestinian Christian grassroots group in Jerusalem.

To be sure, Palestinian Muslims are also leaving Israel and the territories, but it seems the Christian flock is the most vulnerable to being erased from the lands of the Bible.

The Christian population is shrinking twice as fast as it is growing; for every Christian born in the Holy Land, two move abroad.

After last year's elections, when Hamas took control of the Palestinian Authority from the formerly entrenched Fatah party, many Christians feared the hard-line Islamists would make little room for them, especially since most Christians support making peace with Israel.

But those fears haven't come true in Taybeh or elsewhere in the territories.

(Continued on page 5)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Archbishop Desmond Tutu²

Friends of SABEEL – Conference - Boston 27th October 2007

PALESTINE AND APARTHEID

Preamble

Dear Friends, it is a great privilege to be with you again since 2002. As you know, my address then has recently been in the news because on the basis of a distortion of what I said, President Dease of St Thomas University decided I shouldn't visit his campus. It is good that he has since reversed his decision. I commend him for his courage in admitting publicly that he was wrong. It is never easy to do that. I hope that he will reinstate Professor Cris Toffolo. I have received the President's invitation in which he makes a very handsome apology which I have accepted. I am happy to accept his invitation provided it can be fitted into my schedule and if Professor Toffolo is reinstated with no adverse comment in her academic file arising from this unfortunate episode.

I thank God for my Hebrew antecedents. I thank God that I too am a descendant of Abraham. I give thanks to God for the gift of the Holy Scriptures made up substantially of the Hebrew Scriptures forming what we conventionally refer to as our Old Testament. Even our New Testament which would be distinctively Christian, is incomprehensible without taking its Jewish setting seriously. For instance Jesus is the Greek for Joshua who led God's people into the Promised Land and Christ is the Anointed One, in Hebrew - the Messiah, whose coming was predicted in the Jewish scriptures and who was longed for so poignantly by the Jews.

I tell you nothing you do not already know. I refer to it all only to assert that spiritually I am of Hebrew descent. That legacy has been of crucial importance to me in our struggle against Apartheid.

Our Anti-Apartheid Struggle

At the height of the struggle when apartheid's repression was at its most vicious and it seemed indeed as if the apartheid rulers were firmly ensconced in power, when they had all but knocked the stuffing out of their opponents and they were strutting the stage as invincible cocks of the walk, then we turned to the inspiration of our Hebrew tradition and antecedents.

We were able to revive and sustain our people's hope for their vindication and the ultimate triumph of good over evil, of freedom over injustice and oppression by our references to our biblical traditions. It was often quite exhilarating. I remember once when there had been a massacre in one of our townships which had been instigated by a sinister Third Force linked to the apartheid security apparatus, our bishops suspended a session of Episcopal Synod to be there as Ezekiel had been with the stunned exiles, to be there in a ministry of presence, and we held a service in one of our ghetto township churches. The people were stunned, devastated by the naked violence of the massacre. I preached and used Exodus 3:1-9, God's words which Yahweh asked Moses to announce to the children of Israel, I said, "Our God is not deaf – our God has heard our cries; our God is not stupid – God knows our suffering; our God is not blind – God has seen and sees our pain and anguish and...yes, our God will come down and set us free." Yes, our God will come down to open the prison doors and lead our leaders from prison, lead them back from exile. For we had learned from our Jewish tradition that God, our God, is notoriously biased, forever taking the side of the weak, the oppressed, the downtrodden against the kings and the powerful oppressors. Our God had been met first, not in the sanctuary, but in the mundane world of politics, taking the side of a rabble of slaves against the mighty Pharaoh. God is not neutral, God sided with Uriah the Hittite against his favourite, King David after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. Thou art the man. Anywhere else the king could have got away with both actions, but not in Israel. It really seemed as if the Jewish scriptures were written specifically for us. The story of Naboth's vineyard and King Ahab and Jezebel being confronted on Yahweh's behalf by Elijah seemed to have been written especially with our situation in mind, where blacks (not exclusively, but overwhelmingly) were shipped in their millions like so many pawns in population removal schemes and dumped in poverty stricken Bantustan homelands, hardly able to eke out a living, cut off from the more affluent so-called white South Africa.

The widow, the orphan and the alien, who in most traditional societies would be the weakest of the weak seemed to be particular favourites with God who appeared to have a soft spot for them. And so worship of God's people however elaborate and ritually correct would be dismissed as an abomination, unless it made the worshipper have the sensitivity to care for God's favourites (Is.1:11-16). Even something so obviously religious as a fast was rejected out of hand by this God who could declaim that the kind of fast He wanted was that which fed the hungry, set free the captives – all thoroughly secular activities but which confirmed Yahweh's bias in favour of and concern for those who were hard done by, who were at the end of their tether, who were so low they could crawl under a snake. We could multiply references to the prophets Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, et al. It reverberated throughout the prophetic writings, this concern for the poor, the hungry, the downtrodden, the widow, the orphan, the alien.

But it was not just in the prophetic oracles. It was so also in the Pentateuch, the Torah, the scriptures par excellence for God's chosen. Extraordinarily in what was perhaps the book most concerned for cultic ritual matters, Leviticus, where holiness re

ferred most frequently to ritual cultic purity, the worshipper, the Israelite is bidden to be holy as Yahweh is holy and just when we imagined that this would be concerned with ritual holiness, we are brought up short that this is a holiness that plays itself out in a concern for the hungry, the poor. “Be holy even as your God is holy”, and so you must not glean your fields clean at harvest, leave something for the poor and hungry too (Lev.19:1,98). Fantastic – God’s special people must be holy but this is a holiness that expresses itself in mundane acts of caring, of kindness and compassion, of humanitarian concern. In Deuteronomy the motive for doing acts of kindness to God’s favourites, the widow, the orphan and the alien is not emulating God’s holiness, it is the memory of their former status as slaves in Egypt. That memory, it is implied, would prevent them from inflicting on others the kind of anguish they had experienced. They would never do to others, it is assumed, what had been done to them.

I think they are words to be written in letters of gold as pertinent to the situation we are in.

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

“You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge; but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.

When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.”

That is how the people of this God were expected to behave. If you were set to rule over these people as king these were as it were your marching orders, your manifesto, found in the book of Psalms (Psalm 72:1-4,12-14)

“Give the king thy justice, O God, and thy righteousness to the royal son!

May he judge thy people with righteousness, and the poor with justice!

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor!

For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and he needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

The three sections of the Hebrew scriptures – the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings are unanimous in their depiction of the nature of the God revealed in these books.

It was exhilarating preaching to the oppressed and downtrodden. The well to do, the powerful often complained that we were mixing religion with politics and we would declare that we were doing no more than in fact preaching the Gospel. We would be accused of being political and I retorted “I don’t know which Bible you are reading” and “I must say I have never heard the poor complain”, “Bishop Tutu now you’re being political!” If anything they could possibly have said, “You are not political enough.”

And God vindicated us. Apartheid’s rulers bit the dust as all oppressors have done always, for this is a moral universe, right and wrong matter. It cannot happen that evil, injustice and oppression can have the last word. No, ultimately goodness, justice, freedom – these will prevail.

What is this to the point?

I could have spent a great deal of time rehearsing what we all know. How I experienced a *deja vu* when I saw a security check point which Palestinians had to negotiate most of their lives that I was reminded so painfully of the same checkpoints in apartheid South Africa, when arrogant white policemen treated almost all blacks like dirt, or, when someone pointed to a house in Jerusalem and said that used to be our home, but now it has been taken over by the Israelis, which made me recall so painfully similar statements in Cape Town by coloureds who had been thrown out of their homes and relocated in ghetto townships some distance from town. I could have bemoaned the illegal wall that has encroached on Palestinian land, separated families, divided property and made what used to be a short walk to school turn into an expensive nightmare voyage running the gauntlet of checkpoints, etc. I could have said there were things that even apartheid South Africa had not done, for example collective punishment.

I have not gone that route. No, I have chosen a different approach. My address is really a *cri de Coeur*, a cry of anguish from the heart, an impassioned plea to my spiritual relatives, the offspring of Abraham like me – please hear the call, the noble call of your scriptures, of our scriptures, to be with the God of the Exodus who took the side of a bunch of slaves against the powerful Pharaoh, be on the side of the God who intervened through His prophet Elijah on behalf of Naboth, hear the plea of your scriptures and stand with the God who intervened through his prophet Nathan on behalf of Uriah against King David. Be on the side of the God who revealed a soft spot in his heart for the widow, the orphan and the alien, be on the side of the God

whose "Spirit sends us out to preach good news to the poor." Don't be found fighting against the God, your God, our God who hears the cry of the oppressed, who sees their anguish and who will always come down to deliver them. Be not opposed to the God whose Spirit when it anoints you makes you concerned for the poor. This is your calling. If you disobey that calling, if you do not heed it, then as sure as anything one day you will come a cropper. You will probably not succumb to an outside assault militarily. With the unquestioning support of the USA you are probably impregnable. But you who are called are they who are asked to deal with the oppressed, the weak the despised compassionately, caringly, remembering what happened to you in Egypt and much more recently in Germany. Remember and act appropriately. If you reject your calling you may survive for a long time, but you will find it is all corrosive inside and one day you will implode.

A recent report by a clinical psychologist Nufan Yishai Katrim at the Hebrew University speaks of how Israeli soldiers were gratuitously cruel and carried out acts of brutality to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. When you uphold an unjust dispensation it corrodes your humanity. In South Africa a former Cabinet Minister showed this. When told of the death of Steve Biko in detention, he said it left him cold.

Thanks be to God for the many, many Jews who know what their divine calling is and who want the Israeli Government to live it out. We believe in a two state solution – of two sovereign, viable states each with contiguous borders guaranteed as secure by the international community. We condemn acts of terrorism by whoever they are committed. The suicide bomber has to be condemned for targeting innocent civilians. But equally must the Israelis be condemned for their acts of indiscriminate reprisal. We say please learn at least one positive lesson from apartheid South Africa. Under Mr F W de Klerk who must be commended for his outstanding courage, they decided to negotiate, not with those they liked but with their sworn enemy and they found the security that had eluded them for so long and that had cost so much suffering and blood. It came not from the barrel of a gun. No, it came when the legitimate aspirations and human rights of all were recognised and respected. That was thirteen years ago and the peace is still holding. Many had predicted that South Africa would be overwhelmed by a catastrophic racial blood bath. It did not happen. It did not happen because they negotiated in good faith with their enemies.

Somebody has said if something happened once then clearly it is something possible. It happened in South Africa, why not in the Middle East?

The world needs the Jews, Jews who are faithful to their vocation that has meant so much for the world's morality, of its sense of what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, what is just and unjust, what is oppressive and what sets people free. Jews are indispensable for a good compassionate, just and caring world.

And so are Palestinians.

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Even if you are at war with a city...you must not destroy its trees for the tree of the fields is man's life. Deut. 20: 19-20

The Tree of Eternity:

The olive tree (*olea europaea*) is a tree of great beauty. It has a low gnarled trunk that is resistant to decay. It is called the "tree of eternity" because of its ability to regenerate. After 150 years of olive production the tree begins to yield a lower harvest, then around 200 years the cap of the tree dies leaving the roots and base of the trunk. This base is able to produce sprouts, regenerate and begin its life process again. No other tree carries the heritage of the olive. It is at once the symbol for life, hope, peace, wisdom and victory.

Since 1967, an estimated 1,000,000+ olive trees have been destroyed in Palestine. One tree produces 15-40 kg of olives. One litre of olive oil requires 4-6 kg of olives. One tree produces enough olives for 4 to 10 L of oil or average of 10 bottles (each 750ml). Olive trees can start producing olives after 5 years but it takes five decades before achieving a mature olives yield. Olive oil is the primary source of income for about 75,000 Palestinian farmers.

"With the coming of Hamas, the fact that we have been able to continue living as before is an indication that Hamas respects the traditions of mutual openness and tolerance between religions," says Bernard Sabella, a Fatah party member of the Palestinian legislature and a Palestinian Christian. "We should give them credit for that."

Says Abusahlia: "Hamas has dealt with us Christians better than anybody else because it is in their favour to show the world that they are not fanatics."

"But the world did not give them the chance to govern."

He's referring to the international political and financial boycott of much of the Palestinian Authority that has brought a new round of economic woes in the last several months.

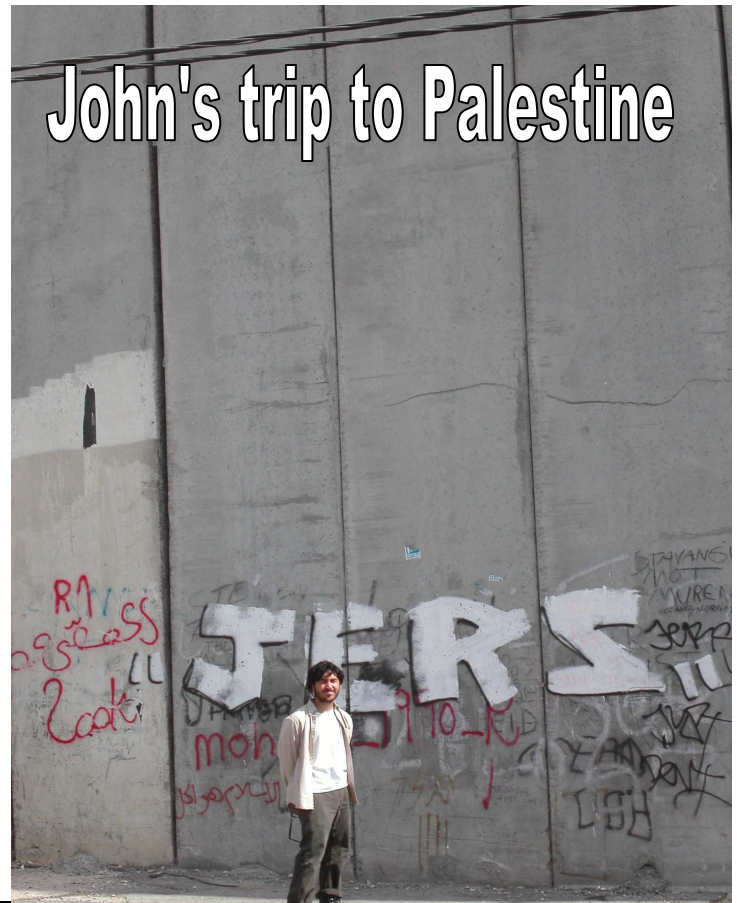
"We are desperate now because everything has changed with this boycott. Everything is getting worse," says Khoury, whose 26-year-old son Firas has been without work for nine months and has applied to immigrate to the United States.

"There's no future here for people like him."

But will there be a future for the only Christian village in the Holy Land?

"Our dignity does not come from our numbers. It comes from our presence," says Abusahlia, sounding a bit offended by the question. "We are an integral part of this country and this people. We have been for 2,000 years and we will remain here forever."

Andrew Mills is a Canadian journalist based in the Middle East.



John Tuzcu: from a recent trip to Israel and Palestine with an Interfaith Peace Builders-AFSC delegation.



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- Removal and theft of mature trees.
- Poisoning of soil, wells and herds.
- Intimidation of farmers by settlers and army.
- Confiscation of land, equipment, ID cards.
- Curfews imposed during key harvest periods.
- Permits required to tend own land.
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It is an impossible challenge to convey the violence of an economic blockade and a military occupation to a fortunate American population that has never experienced such forms of oppression. One of the more humble ways to think about the conflict is to listen to people that live it. Below are expressions of life in Gaza, a lifestyle imposed on 1.5 million people that have experienced the realities of a collective punishment campaign launched by the State of Israel earlier this year. Dr. Mona El-Farra has been blogging from Gaza City since March 2006. Along with being a physician, she is a human rights and women's activist, offering intimate descriptions of the misery of life under siege.

Over the last two months, Israeli State policies have plunged the people of the Gaza Strip into darkness and deprivation. Two thirds of Gazans are food deprived, 80% are unemployed and droves of sick people are not receiving basic treatment. On January 18, Israel closed down all the crossings in and out of Gaza. Commercial goods, food, fuel, medicine and humanitarian aid was also restricted from entering Gaza. Eighty percent of Gazans rely on aid from the UN and other humanitarian organizations. Fresh meat and wheat are scarce. Many people who found work in Israel before the siege of Gaza are now unable to enter Israel to resume work. Poverty is over 80%. Israel also has significant control of the electricity that enters Gaza. The Gaza Strip requires 240 megawatts of which Israel provides 120. Egypt provides 17. The Gaza power plant, which Israel partially destroyed in 2006, only provides 65 megawatts. Many parts of Gaza don't get electricity for 8 hours a day, everyday. Hospitals are having to shutdown their units due to the lack of power.

The Gaza waste water system is marginally functional; most of the waste is being dumped into the Mediterranean. (Continued on page 7)

Dry Bones AFTER THE SURGE ... THE SPLURGE



“Blessed are the Peacemakers:”

They Shall Be Enticed to Do Our Will Through Weapons?

By Frieda Berrigan, <http://worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/>

During his eight day tour of the Middle East, President George W. Bush walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Literally. The President is a born again Christian and toured sites of historic and religious significance to many believers. At the Sea of Galilee, President George W. Bush was shown the place where Jesus walked on water. He toured the Church of the Beatitudes where Jesus delivered these lines: “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, they will be satisfied” and “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. President Bush also visited the Church of the Nativity, built atop Jesus’ birthplace.

Tears welled up in President Bush’s eyes and he called himself a pilgrim as he made his way through these sites, accompanied by nuns and priests. He was a very expensive pilgrim. The *New York Times* reports that Israeli taxpayers ponied up about \$25,000 an hour just for Presidential security expenses during his two days in Israel.

The trip—which began on January 9th—marked this President’s first expedition to the region. At every stop he made the case for peace between Israel and Palestine and preached the secular gospel of democracy to the Gulf Kingdoms. He also brought news of millions in weapons for Saudi Arabia.

The announcement came as the President prepared for meetings with the Saudi King Abdullah. Made by Boeing’s St. Louis division, the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAMs) tail kits are worth an estimated \$123 million, and are just a sliver of the more than \$20 billion in U.S. weapons promised to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in late July 2007.

Israel’s concerns about the package were assuaged by Washington’s commitment (announced at the same time) to provide Jerusalem with \$30 billion in military aid over the next ten years. Just as Egypt’s concerns were met with a continuation of their \$1.3 billion in military aid each year for the next ten years.

Representatives Anthony Weiner (D-NY) and Robert Wexler (D-FL) penned a letter against these weapons transfers that highlighted Saudi Arabia’s lack of cooperation on counter-terrorism projects. That letter was sent to President Bush with 114 signatures. Representatives Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Christopher Carney (D-PA) circulated a separate letter voicing concerns that the JDAMs could be used against U.S. troops, which garnered 180 signatures. On the Senate side, Joe Biden, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee who recently dropped out of the run for President, told Reuters “thus far, the justification for the sale has not been made to me.”

Facing this opposition, the administration changed tactics, according to analysts at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation and “began to put its smaller nation-by-nation strategy into effect.” So, before news of the proposed JDAM sale to Saudi Arabia was announced, notices about \$328 million in Raytheon TOW missiles and other systems to Kuwait and a \$326 million package of AMRAAM missiles, JDAMs and bombs to the UAE came and went with little scrutiny. Congress has 30 days to act against proposed arms sales valued at more than \$50 million (for most countries).

Now, Weiner and Wexler have submitted a resolution to block the Saudi sale. They have 51 co-sponsors, but Reuters reports that Rep. Tom Lantos, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is not going to schedule a vote on the resolution, which would stall it in committee. According to Wexler, “Saudi Arabia has refused to adopt financial sanctions on Iran, banking sanctions on Iran. So why is it reasonable to assume that Saudi Arabia might use military weapons in concert with American ... interests with respect to Iran?”

The arms package was calculated to reward and reassure Gulf allies weary of war in Iraq, provide incentives for peace talks and head off Iran’s growing influence in the region.

At the opulent Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi on January 13th, President Bush intoned “America is using its influence to foster peace and reconciliation... the time has come for a Holy Land where Palestinian and Israeli live together in peace. America will do our part.”

A few days later, reports of gun battles between Israeli security forces and Hamas members that killed 18 Palestinians, a kibbutz worker from Ecuador, and wounded five Israelis, marred hopes for the newly started peace talks and served as a sober reminder of the futility of the project of building peace by providing weapons and military aid.

Around 50% of Gaza households have access to running water for only 4-6 hours a day. In the camps, the 'drinking' water is a mixture of mud and sewage slush. Gazans stopped waiting for international help and took matters into their own hands. They destroyed the wall between Gaza and Egypt on January 23 and nearly half of the 1.5 million population entered into Egypt to gather food, medicine and other necessities. The following was posted by El-Farrah as Israel momentarily allowed some electricity to

Great news, thanks to my occupier electricity is back ! Monday, January 21, 2008

**Thanks to the Israeli occupation!
Now, after 36 hours of cut of the electricity in my flat, I will be able
to wash my cloths,
to have my shower,
to use the electrical elevator,
to buy bread.**

**My daughter can do her home work,
I can watch television and loudly shout:**

Long live Mr. Bush and Israel for this big blessing electricity, in Gaza.

I do not need to worry about 1.5 million population, who live under this cruel siege, where we do not have cement to build our homes or our graves, where my patients die daily due to lack of proper treatment in Gaza and do not have accessibility to further treatment abroad because of border closures.

No need to worry about lack of different sorts of medications inside our hospitals.

**No need to worry about the increasing number of children, who suffer of malnutrition due to lack of proper food,
as an outcome of poverty.**

No need to worry about the increasing number of women and children, who suffer from posttraumatic stress disorders.

No need to feel insecure, inside or outside my home, as the Israeli raids continue against Gaza.

**No need to worry about my restriction of movement, and inability to travel, even to the west bank
(last week one of my fiends in the WB, passed away, and I could not go to pay my last look and say goodbye.)**

**I am too greedy a person and nagging too, I should be happy and content, in my beautiful big cage,
and welcome electricity and be very grateful to my occupier.**

With lots of love, from Mona who lives in the 21st century and under occupation !!!!!!! Mona Elfarr--

www.fromgaza.blogspot.com

**...the name of Allah,
the beneficent, the merciful.**

**Praise be to the Lord of the
Universe who has created us and
made us into tribes and nations
that we may know each other, not that
we may despise each other.**

**If the enemy incline towards peace, do
thou also incline towards peace, and
trust God, for the Lord is the one that
heareth and knoweth all things.**

**And the servants of God,
Most gracious are those who walk on
the Earth in humility.**



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ISRAEL?

When I think of "Israel", I try to keep four distinct, yet intermingled concepts in mind. The first concept of "**Israel**" is the **person**, that is, Jacob who wrestled with God and became known as "Israel". The second is the collective people "**Israel**", **those who have joined in a specific covenant with God**. The third is "**Eretz Israel**", the land historically known as "Israel". And the fourth is the **contemporary nation of Israel**. While each is a more or less separate entity, these concepts overlap each other to some extent in the context of many who possess a Jewish identity. This makes criticism of the policies of the modern nation of Israel sound much harsher to some ears than is perhaps intended. I think it is healthy, and possible, to celebrate and acknowledge the existence of the first three when taking issue with the latter. As we all know from experience with loved ones, it is possible to care very deeply for someone, and still experience frustration with specific behaviors they may exhibit.

[Submitted by Elton Davis former Coordinator of IPN.]

Registered Parties currently holding parliamentary seats in the Parliament (Knesset):

- [Balad Party](#) (*Al-Tajmua Al-Watani Al-Democrati*)
- [Gil](#) (*Gimlae Yisrael LaKnesset*)

- [Hadash Party](#) (*Democratic Front for Peace and Equality / Ha-Hazit Hademocratit LeShalom Ve'Shivion*)
- [Ikhud Le'umi](#) (*National Union*)
- [Moledet Movement](#) (*Tnu'at Moledet*)
- [Kadima Party](#) (*Mifleget Kadima*)
- [Labour Party](#) (*Mifleget HaAvoda HaYisraelit*)
- [Labour Party Youth](#) (*Ha'Noar Ha'Oved ve-Ha'Lomed*)
- [Meymad Party](#) (*Mifleget Meymad*)
- [Likud Party](#) (*Mifleget Ha'Likud*)
- [Betar Youth Movement](#) (*Joseph Trumpeldor Union / Brit Yosef Trumpeldor*)
- [Mafdal Party](#) (*National Religious Party / Miflaga Datit Le'umit*)
- [Meretz Party](#) (*Mifleget Meretz*)
- [Moledet Movement](#) (*Tnu'at Moledet*)
- [Shas Party](#) (*Mifleget Sfaradim Somrei Torah*)
- [Arab Democratic Party](#) (*Hezb Al-Democracy Al-Arabi / Miflaga Democratit Aravit*)
- [Israeli Islamic Movement](#)
- [Yisrael Betenu](#) (*Israel is our Home*)
- **Registered Parties currently not holding parliamentary seats**
- [Da'am Party](#)
- [Green Leaf Party](#) (*Ale Yarok*)
- [Havil](#) (*Jewish National Front / Hazit Yehudit Leumit*)
- [Herut Movement](#) (*Freedom Movement/ Tnu'at Herut*)
- [Shinui Party](#) (*Mifleget Shinui*)